CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FREE LANCE JOURNALIST JOHN J. SULLIVAN, JR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY
DATE MAR 1 5 1984
RDS or XDE EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS
DECLASSIFIED RELEASABLE
RELEASE DENIED
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS
DEC 28 1983

EXCISE

JOHN J. SULLIVAN DEPARTED FROM BOGOTA, N.J. ON ASSIGNMENT FOR FLYNT PUBLICATIONS TO DO A 4500 WORD INDEPTH ARTICLE ON THE CIVIL STRIFE IN EL SALVADOR. HIS INTENTION WAS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM BOTH POLITICAL FACTIONS AND BASE HIS ARTICLE ON THIS MATERIAL. HE ARRIVED AT THE SHERATON HOTEL IN SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR AT APPROXIMATELY 6:30 PM. (HE WANTED TO ARRIVE BEFORE DUSK.

[illegible]UARY 2, 1981
[illegible]RPORATE SHERATON
[illegible]ERSION

SHERATON HOTEL CHAMBERMAID, WHO HAD BEEN LISTING JOHN'S ROOM AS "OCCUPIED BUT NOT SLEPT IN", FINALLY BECAME SUSPICIOUS BECAUSE ROOM HAD NOT BEEN USED AND ALL BELONGINGS REMAINED INTACT (TAPE RECORDER, CAMERA, TYPEWRITER AND CLOTHES). CHAMBERMAID ASKS HOTEL GUEST, U.S. MILITARY COLONEL BOSCH (A.I.D.), TO LOOK IN JOHN'S ROOM WHICH HE DOES. COLONEL BOSCH OCCUPIED A ROOM NEAR JOHN SULLIVAN'S ROOM. HE REPORTED JOHN MISSING TO EMBASSY.

[illegible]ANUARY 4, 1981
[illegible]ANUARY 5, 1981
[illegible].S. EMBASSY VERSIONS

(THE ACCOUNTS RELATED ON THESE DATES BY U.S. EMBASSY PERSONNEL CONTAIN THE SAME FACTUAL DATA LISTED ABOVE BUT MAINTAIN THESE EVENTS HAPPENED ON TWO DIFFERENT DATES.)

[illegible]NUARY 5, 1981
[illegible].S. EMBASSY VERSION

(DATE COMPARES TO THE 2nd VERSION OF THE U.S. EMBASSY HOWEVER NOW COLONEL WAS HAVING A DRINK WITH THE HOTEL MANAGER WHEN THE CHAMBERMAID APPROACHED HIM AS OPPOSED TO BEING IN HIS ROOM.)

CONSULAR

JANUARY 6, 1981 — Tue

MR. HOWARD LANE, PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER, U.S. EMBASSY, INSPECTED JOHN'S ROOM AND REPORTED HIM MISSING TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE. AT APPROXIMATELY 6:15 PM UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL CALLED JOHN'S MOTHER CONCERNING HIS REPORTED DISAPPEARANCE. AT APPROXIMATELY 7:30 PM THE TATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED JOHN'S MOTHER OF HIS DISAPPEARANCE. FAMILY CONTACTS U.S. EMBASSY IN EL SALVADOR - MARINE GUARD ANSWERS ADVISING THEY MUST CALL BACK IN THE MORNING AS HE IS THE ONLY ONE ON DUTY. FAMILY THEN CALLS EL SALVADOR SHERATON - NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE. FAMILY PLACES SEVERAL CALLS TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT, FLYNT PUBLICATIONS, UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL AND THE WHITE HOUSE - NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

JANUARY 7, 1981 — Wed

FAMILY CALLS THE EL CAMINO REAL HOTEL TO TALK TO RAYMOND BONNER (N.Y. TIMES CORRESPONDENT). NO INFORMATION; THE EMBASSY, WHITE HOUSE AND STATE DEPARTMENT ALSO HAVE NO INFORMATION AFTER SEVEN PHONE CALLS. ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE TO SEND JOHN'S PHOTO OVER THE WIRE VIA UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL AND ASSOCIATED PRESS. FLYNT PUBLICATIONS MAKES SEVERAL CALLS FOR INFORMATION ON BEHALF OF THE FAMILY WITH NO SUCCESS. FAMILY CONTACTED VARIOUS NEWS MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES AND AMNESTY INTERNATIN NONAL. (AI NOT ABLE TO ACTIVATE "URGENT ACTION NETWORK" DUE TO DELAY IN ORIGINAL NOTIFICATION. [illegible]

JANUARY 8, 1981 — Thu

FOUR CALLS TO U.S. EMBASSY REQUESTING THEM TO CHECK OUT SEVERAL LEADS FOR THE FAMILY -

- LOCATE TAXI DRIVER WHO DROVE JOHN FROM THE AIRPORT TO THE HOTEL AND POSSIBLE FROM THE HOTEL AGAIN
- INTERVIEW HOTEL EMPLOYEES (DESK CLERK, BAR TENDER, CHAMBERMAID). (A FRIEND OF JOHN'S CALLED THE HOTEL AND SPOKE WITH A BAR TENDER

JANUARY 8, 1981
(continued)

WHO CLAIMED THAT JOHN HAD BEEN THERE FOR A FEW DRINKS WHEN THE CALL WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE MANAGER (?) WHO DENIED JOHN HAD BEEN THERE AND HANGS UP

- SEARCH PRISONS/JAILS/HOSPITALS
- INVENTORY BELONGINGS TO DETERMINE WHAT JOHN WAS WEARING WHEN HE DISAPPEARED
- CHECK CAR RENTAL AGENCIES AND RESTAURANTS

FAMILY WAS TOLD BY HOWARD LANE THAT JOHN WAS NOT A PRIORITY AND TO HAVE NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE SEARCH BEING CONDUCTED BY THE LOCAL POLICE. HE ADVISED THAT JOHN COULD HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF A CIVILIAN CRIME AND BURIED. THE FAMILY IS TOLD THAT THE EL SALVADOR SHERATON WILL NOT RELEASE JOHN'S BELONGINGS TO THE EMBASSY UNTIL HIS BILL IS PAID (APPROXIMATELY $240.00). THREE CALLS TO FLYNT PUBLICATIONS TO COORDINATE INFORMATION. TACA AIRLINES WILL NOT RELEASE COPY OF FLIGHT LIST TO FAMILY BUT WILL RELEASE IT TO A U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCY. FAMILY ASKS STATE DEPARTMENT TO OBTAIN SAME. FAMILY ASKS THAT FLIGHT CREW BE INTERVIEWED TO DETERMINE WHO SAT NEXT TO JOHN DURING THE FLIGHT FROM MIAMI. MORE CURRENT PICTURE OF JOHN SENT OVER WIRE SERVICES, WORLDWIDE, YET EL SALVADOR DID NOT PICK IT UP UNTIL THE FOURTH TRANSMISSION. FAMILY REQUESTED THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS BE INVOLVED HOWEVER THEY WERE TOLD THAT WAS UP TO THE HOST COUNTRY.

JANUARY 9, 1981

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ADVISES IT HAS INSTRUCTED THE EMBASSY TO INTENSIFY ITS SEARCH EFFORTS. WHEN FAMILY SPEAKS TO HOWARD LANE ABOUT THIS HE LAUGHS ADVISING THEY ARE UNDERSTAFFED AND CAN DO NO MORE. AMERICAN SOCIETY OF JOURNALISTS & AUTHORS SEND NIGHT LETTER TO SECRETARY MUSKIE DEPLORING LACK OF EFFORT IN SEARCH FOR JOHN (COPY ATTACHED). FAMILY CALLS EMBASSY ASKING THEM TO CHECK JOHN'S HOTEL

NUARY 9, 1981 (continued)

MORE CALLS WERE MADE TO WASHINGTON. SHERATON CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS WAS CONTACTED RELATIVE TO THE EL SALVADOR HOTEL BILL. MR. TOM ALT, DIRECTOR-SECURITY WILL CHECK INTO THE MATTER AND ADVISE.

NUARY 10, 1981

FAMILY CALLED THE EMBASSY ASKING FOR A COPY OF THE BILL AND A COPY OF THE REGISTRATION CARD TO VERIFY JOHN'S SIGNATURE. TOLD THAT THE DIRECTOR OF PRISONS SEARCHED THE JAILS AND PRISONS FOR JOHN. LATER, PAT LASBURY, U.S. EMBASSY, ADVISES SHE SEARCHED THE PRISONS [redacted] NO INFORMATION.

NUARY 12, 1981

SPOKE WITH PAS COHEN OF STATION WHUR IN WASHINGTON TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS ANY PARALLEL BETWEEN JOHN'S DISAPPEARANCE AND THAT OF RENEE TAMPSEN SIX MONTHS AGO IN EL SALVADOR.

NUARY 13, 1981

REQUESTED DUPLICATE INFORMATION FILE FROM THE INFORMATION BANK IN PARSIPPANY, N.J. WHICH JOHN HAD REQUESTED BEFORE HIS TRIP AND HAD TAKEN WITH HIM HOPING FOR LEADS. FAMILY RECEIVED A TELEGRAM FROM SHERATON CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS ADVISING THAT NO FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION NEED BE MET PRIOR TO THE RELEASE OF JOHN'S BELONGINGS (COPY ATTACHED). THEY ADVISED THEY WOULD ONLY DEAL WITH THE FAMILY AS FLYNT PUBLICATIONS HAD ALSO CALLED CONCERNING THE BILL. MAILED A LETTER TO SENATOR PERCY ASKING FOR HIS HELP WHICH HAS NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING. FAMILY MEMBERS MET WITH A SOURCE WHO SAID THAT JOHN WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE TO DISAPPEAR FROM THE SHERATON ON THAT NIGHT. SOME OF THE OTHERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED DUE TO FAMILY PRESSURE ON THE JUNTA. THIS COULD BE JOHN'S FATE, IF SO HE WOULD BE IN ONE OF THREE LOCAL PRISONS. U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD APPLY PRESS-

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UARY 13, 1981
ontinued)

SEARCH BE CONDUCTED FOR JOHN. FOLLOWING THIS MEETING SEVERAL CALLS WERE MADE TO THE WHITE HOUSE, STATE DEPARTMENT AND CONGRESSWOMAN ROUKEMA REQUESTING A CONFERENCE (PHONE) WITH SECRETARY MUSKIE. ALL REQUESTS WERE DENIED UNTIL WE ADVISED WE WOULD HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO GO TO THE PRESS CONCERNING THE LACK OF ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY THE UNITED STATES. A CALL IS FINALLY RECEIVED FROM SECRETARY MUSKIE WHO IS, IN OUR OPINION, VERY RUDE AND ARROGANT. HE BECOMES OBSESSED WITH THE IDENTIFICATION OF OUR SOURCE. HE BEGAN THE CONVERSATION BY STATING "UP UNTIL THIRTY MINUTES AGO, I DID NOT EVEN KNOW JOHN J. SULLIVAN EXISTED". LATER IN THE CONVERSATION HE SAYS TO JOHN's MOTHER "DO YOU THINK YOUR SON IS THE ONLY ONE THIS HAS HAPPENED TO?" AND CLOSES THE CONVERSATION WITH A PROMISE TO PERSONALLY CALL PRESIDENT DUARTE "THOUGH I KNOW IT WILL DO NO GOOD", AND "DO YOU REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE RUINED MY NIGHTS SLEEP WITH THIS FRUSTRATING PHONE CALL?". DEPARTMENT OF STATE READS COPY OF TELEGRAM FROM EMBASSY (COPY ATTACHED) STATING NO NEW LEADS, FLIGHT PERSONNEL INTERVIEWEDSUGGEST HIRING A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR. (FAMILY WAS ABLE TO DETERMINE FROM INVESTORY OF BELONGINGS THAT JOHN WAS WEARING MEDIUM GREY CORDUROY TROUSERS (CALVIN KLEIN) BEIGE POPLIN GOLF JACKET (ZIPPER FRONT) AND TAN DINGO BOOTS.

NUARY 15, 1981

FAMILY SENT TELEGRAM TO SENATOR HARRISON A. WILLIAMS (COPY ATTACHED) ASKING HIS HELP. ONE PHONE BILL WAS RECEIVED TOTALLING $500.00.

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UARY 16, 1981 — FAMILY CALLED AMBASSADOR AQUINA AT THE SALVADORAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. HE PROMISED TO SEND A TELEGRAM TO HIS GOVERNMENT ASKING WHAT HAS BEEN DONE FOR JOHN. (THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE)

JANUARY 17, 1981 — U.S. AMBASSADOR WHITE CALLS JOHN'S MOTHER. SECRETARY MUSKIE DID NOT CALL DUARTE BUT HE (WHITE) PERSONALLY SPOKE WITH DUARTE IN EL SALVADOR. DUARTE WAS AWARE OF JOHN'S DISAPPEARANCE BUT HAD NO LEADS OR CLUES IN THE CASE. FAMILY SENDS A TELEGRAM TO DUARTE (COPY ATTACHED) WITH COPIES TO MSGR. URASTE AND FR. SPAIN. TELEGRAM REQUESTS DUARTE DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO LOCATE JOHN. FAMILY WRITES TO THE PAPAL DELEGATE IN WASHINGTON ASKING FOR HIS INTERVENTION (COPY ATTACHED). MS. LASBURY,-U.S. EMBASSY, ADVISED THAT THE FLIGHT MANIFEST CANNOT BE CHECKED DUE TO STAFF LIMITATIONS YET ON 1/31/80 FAMILY WAS ADVISED VIA TELEGRAM THAT THIS HAD ALREADY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. FAMILY AGAIN ASKS EMBASSY TO RUN JOHN'S PICTURE IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS SUGGESTING AN ANONYMOUS APPROACH FOR ANYONE WITH INFORMATION. ALTHOUGH PREVIOUSLY TOLD THERE WERE NO CALLS ON JOHN'S BILL AN OUTGOING CALL WAS CHARGED TO HIS PHONE ON THE 4th OF JANUARY. THIS WAS ALLEGEDLY MADE BY COLONEL BOSCH WHEN HE WENT INTO THE ROOM WITH THE CHAMBERMAID. MS. LASBURY ADVISES THAT CIA IS IN RESIDENCE AND WORKING ON THE CASE YET WASHINGTON CIA DENIES ANY SUCH INVOLVEMENT. FBI ADVISES THEY ARE IN EL SALVADOR IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY NOT INVESTIGATORY.

NUARY 19, 1981 — FAMILY HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB IN NEW YORK. STATEMENTS READ FROM SENATORS BRADLEY AND WILLIAMS AND FLYNT PUBLICATIONS. REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS MEDIA CONCERNS ARE PRESENT. FAMILY MAKES PLEA TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC TO WRITE TO PRESIDENT REAGAN OR SECRETARY HAIG ASKING THEM TO LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED IN SEARCH EFFORTS. (PEN, AMERICAN SOCIETY OF JOURNALISTS & AUTHORS, AUTHORS LEAGUE OF AMERICA AND MR. G. ELSTON OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTED.

NUARY 22, 1981 — FAMILY CALLS REV. SCHINDLER IN EL SALVADOR WHO SAY HE WILL HELP IF HE CAN. FAMILY APPEARS ON CABLE TV TALK SHOW AND AGAIN APPEALS TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. BOROUGH OF BOGOTA PASSES A RESOLUTION AND WRITES TO ALL BOROUGHS IN BERGEN COUNTY TO EXERT PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE ITS SEARCH. AMBASSADOR WHITE PUBLICLY DENOUNCES THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATHS OF THE FOUR MISSIONARIES, STATING HE WILL NOT BE A PARTY TO A COVER-UP. FAMILY WRITES LETTERS OF APPEAL TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, SECRETARY HAIG AND MRS. REAGAN. (No Response as of [illegible])

NUARY 23, 1981 — MR. YEAGER IN CONGRESSWOMAN ROUKEMA'S OFFICE WAS CONTACTED AND ASKED WHY THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COULD NOT BE INVOLVED. HE ADVISED THAT SECRETARY MUSKIE HAD STATED THAT THERE WAS NO MORE THAT COULD BE DONE IN JOHN'S CASE. MR. YEAGER ADVISED THAT THEY HAD REQUESTED RED CROSS INVOLVEMENT, IN WRITING, FROM SECRETARY HAIG. FAMILY CONTACTED THE REV. WIPFLER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FOR THEIR HELP.

NUARY 25, 1981 — THE STATE DEPARTMENT ASKS THE FAMILY TO PAY FOR THE ADDITIONAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE LOCAL PAPERS ($240.00 PER DAY) AS THE EMBASSY HAS NO FUNDS FOR THIS. IT WOULD APPEAR AS THOUGH WE NOT ONLY HAVE TO PERFORM THE INVESTIGATION BUT FINANCE IT AS WELL. RECEIVED A COPY OF THE HOTEL REGISTRATION CARD AND VERIFY THE SIGNATURE AS JOHN'S. PROFESSION LISTED AS JOURNALIST ON REGISTRATION CARD.

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ANUARY 27, 1981 — MAILED POWER OF ATTORNEY (COPY ATTACHED) TO THE U.S. EMBASSY REQUESTING THAT THEY HOLD THE BELONGINGS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE EXCEPT FOR ANY WRITTEN OR PRINTED MATERIAL WHICH THE FAMILY ASKED TO BE FORWARDED HOME.

UARY 29, 1981 — MR. QUIGLEY OF THE U.S. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE WAS CONTACTED FOR ASSISTANCE AS WAS THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICE IN NEW YORK. TACA AIRLINES WAS ASKED TO DETERMINE IF THE RETURN TRIP TICKET HAD BEEN CASHED IN OR USED - THEY WILL ADVISE.

JANUARY 30, 1981 — THE STATE DEPARTMENT WAS ASKED BY THE FAMILY TO FORWARD WRITTEN REPORTS ON THE DISAPPEARANCE AND INVESTIGATION FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY AND LOCAL POLICE CHIEF NUILE. ADVISE THE COLOR AND # OF JOHN'S PASSPORT. REQUESTED THE EMBASSY PLACE JOHN'S PHOTO IN CHURCHES, POST OFFICES AND OTHER PUBLIC GATHERING PLACES. STATE DEPART- ASKED TO CALL ON A DAILY BASIS WITH PROGRESS REPORT. A.I.D. IN WASHINGTON ADVISED THAT THEY REMOVED THEIR PERSONNEL FROM THE SHERATON HOTEL DUE TO SECURITY REASONS. MR. MACHAK, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COORDINATOR WAS ASKED TO RELEASE ANY AND ALL INFORMATION AND/OR FILES BEING HELD OR MAINTAINED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT, FBI, CIA, AID, U.S. EMBASSY, ET AL. FANILY REQUESTED SENATOR WILLIAMS OFFICE ARRANGE A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN.

FEBRUARY 2, 1981 — FIVE WEEKS AFTER JOHN'S DISAPPEARANCE THE STATE DEPARTMENT READ A TELEGRAM FROM THE EMBASSY ADVISING THAT MR HEUMANN, CHIEF OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS IN EL SALVADOR, HAS BECOME INVOLVED.* FAMILY REQUESTED ARCHBISHOP GERRITY, ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK, FOR HIS ASSISTANCE. MR. BIRNS OF THE COUNCIL OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WAS ALSO ASKED FOR HIS ASSISTANCE. *WHY WAS THIS NOT DONE WHEN FAMILY FIRST ASKED.

SOME OTHER PEOPLE CONTACTED WERE: REPRESENTATIVES STUDDS, TSONGAS, SHANNON, FENWICK; SENATORS BRADLEY + WILLIAMS; MARYKNOLL; PHOTOENGRAVERS UNION; NEWSPAPER GUILD.

OTHER REPORTERS SPOKEN TO INCLUDE: S. KINSER, M. NELSON, C. KRAUS, A. NELSON, S. CHINDLER, A. MCFAIL, C. MCCARTHY, JACK ANDERSON, JIMMY BRESLIN.

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John covered, on location, the revolutions in Nicaragua and Bolivia.

He Was a Resident Radio Correspondent for ABC News during his year long 1979 residency in Brazil. He was fluent in Portuguese and conversant in Spanish.

Some of John's articles appeared in:

FORBES MAGAZINE

ARGOSY

CELEBRITY

THE BERGEN RECORD

THE LATIN AMERICAN DAILY POST

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

(HONG KONG) STAR

BRAZIL POST

TO THE POINT

PAN AM IN-FLIGHT

LONDON BIRMINGHAM POST

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF JOURNALISTS AND AUTHORS, INC.
1501 Broadway, Suite 1907, New York NY 10036 • (212) 997-0947

Night Letter sent January 9, 1981

TO: Edmund Muskie, Secretary of State
The State Department
Washington, DC 20520

The Professional Rights Committee of the 600-member American Society of Journalists and Authors is profoundly alarmed at the State Department's failure to locate free-lance journalist John Sullivan III in El Salvador.

We have learned that only a minimal effort has been made to find Mr. Sullivan and are especially appalled that the Foreign Service Officer in San Salvador, Mr. Howard Lane, advised the Sullivan family to hire a private detective to trace their son.

We feel that the greatest possible pressure should be placed on the government of El Salvador to produce Mr. Sullivan. This is clearly the responsibility of the two governments concerned. If any investigative journalist is threatened and imprisoned with impunity, the American public's "right to know" is greatly compromised.

The obvious neglect with which Mr. Sullivan's disappearance has been treated is a direct attack on press freedom by El Salvador and suggests a certain indifference on the part of your department.

The Professional Rights Committee
Patrick J. McGrady, Chairman

Grace Weinstein, President

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January 13, 1981

The Honorable Charles Percy
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The recent events occurring in El Salvador would normally be just another news item to my family and me however we currently have a great deal at stake in this country. My son, John J. Sullivan, Jr., is a free lance journalist on assignment in San Salvador. He has not been seen or heard from since the day he arrived in San Salvador and checked into the Sheraton Hotel which was December 28, 1980. The United States Embassy was notified on January 4, 1981 and in turn they notified us on January 6, 1981 concerning my son's disappearance. Efforts, both private and through diplomatic channels, have failed to relieve the terrible burden we must carry until we know, beyond a doubt, what has happened.

I am not attuned to the inner workings of our government however I must admit that I am now accutely aware that the wheels turn ever so slowly. I have been able, through the news media, to develop facts that both astonish and anger me. Specifically there are two areas which concern me deeply.

First, the disappearance of my son has been likened to the murder of four missionaries and two labor attornies. Embassy and State Department officials in Washington hold our little hope that my son is still alive. Given this I must question the absence of an FBI investigation as was the case with the deaths of the four missionaries. We have been repeatedly advised by Embassy and State Department personnel that any investigation by the host country would be virtually non-existent. One would hope that a country receiving millions of United States dollars in economic and military aid could be required to provide an extensive investigation into six deaths and one disappearance. Certainly this very lackadaisical attitude on the part of El Salvador officials led the FBI to investigate the first four murders. Will the FBI actively investigate my son's disappearance?

Second, I feel that the treatment my family has received from the Executive Branch of the Government of the United States is disgraceful. For the White House to have so little concern for what is happening to its citizens is truly heartbreaking to a man who was brought up with very high ideals as an American citizen. The latest affront from the Carter Administration was in the person of LEONARD LESKO (phonetic) who quite simply hung up the phone on one of my daughters. I am sure you find this hard to believe yet it is true.

Surely we are still a government of the peo
and for the people. I was taught this and
believe it. It is time that something be do
my family is experiencing. We must be entit
lip service. Would you expect any less for

Thank you for your attention in this matter a
earliest reply.

Very truly yours,

John J. Sullivan, Sr.

cc: Senator William Bradley
Representative Marge Roukema
Mr. Lewis
Flint Publications
Mr. Jack Anderson
Washington Post
Ms. Carol Jenkins
WNBC-TV
New York, New York
Ms. Loni Reed
WNEW-TV
New York, New York
Mr. Randi Daniels
c/o Network News
American Broadcasting Company
New York, New York
Mr. Robert Kravitz
The Record
Hackensack, New Jersey

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF JOURNALISTS AND AUTHORS, INC.
1501 Broadway, Suite 1907, New York NY 10036 • (212) 997-0947

January 13, 1981

John Sullivan Jr.
Photo-engraving Dept.
New York Daily News
220 E. 42 St.
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

I have been asked to send you another copy of the mailgram I sent to Secretary of State Muskie on Friday. Copies were also sent to the New York Times and to the Associated Press, as well as to Senator Moynihan (copy enclosed). We will continue to publicize your son's plight and hope that you will have good news soon.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Stearn

Dorothy Stearn
Executive Director

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FAXGRAM via Graphnet

99 WEST SHEFFIELD AVENUE ■ ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07631 201-569-7707

DLEG

3B D103 51-I H100 2 01/18/81 15:02 07603 1555L JW

R AND MRS JOHN JOSEPH SULLIVAN JR

[redacted]

. CONOFF SPOKE PERSONALLY WITH MOTHER OF JOHN J. SULLIVAN
ODAY AND ASSURED HER THAT EMBASSY CONTINUES TO TRACE THE
WHEREABOUTS OF HER SON. AN EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATION
INVOLVING PAO AND CONOFF VISITS TO THE NATIONAL POLICE,
OSPITALS, HOTEL SHERATON, CAR RENTAL AGENCIES AS WELL AS
NTERVIEWS OF TAXI DRIVERS, HOTEL CLERKS, WAITRESSES, MEDIA
EPRESENTATIVES, MISSIONARIES AND AIRLINE PERSONNEL HAS
EEN CARRIED OUT WITH NO CLUES WHATSOEVER.
. A COMPLETE INVENTORY OF SULLIVAN'S EFFECTS AND EQUIPMENT
AS BEEN MAILED TO HIS PARENTS WITH A COPY POUCHED TO THE
PARTMENT. ALSO MAILED WAS COPY OF SIGNATURE ON OUTSTANDING
TEL BILL. EFFECTS ARE IN CUSTODY OF HOTEL MANAGER AND WILL
E RELEASED WHEN EMBASSY PRESENTS POWER OF ATTORNEY AND
ESOLUTION OF OUTSTANDING BILL IS SETTLED.
POST REQUESTS THAT PARENTS DRAW UP POWER OF
TORNEY NAMING U.S. CONSUL RESPONSIBLE FOR CLAIMING
FFECTS AND PAYING BILL IN SON'S NAME. DEPARTMENT IS
REQUESTED TO INSTRUCT MR. AND MRS. SULLIVAN ON HOW
ORWARD FUNDS THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS.
NOFF HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH PRESIDENT OF TACA
AGREES TO PROVIDE CREW AND FLIGHT MANIFEST.
NFORTUNATELY, EMBASSY PERSONNEL SHORTAGE DOES NOT
ERMIT AN EXTENSIVE INVESTIGATION OF ALL PERSONS ON
OARD SAME FLIGHT. HOWWEVER, IF SULLIVANS EVENTUALLY
ECIDE TO HIRE A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR, POST WILL ASSIST
IM IN ORTAINING NAMES OF PASSENGERS.
. POST WOULD LIKE DEPARTMENT TO EXPLAIN DIFFICULTIES
F CONDUCTING INVESTIGATION AT NIGHT DUE TO CURRENT
URFEW WHICH STARTS AT 7 P.M. AND ENDS AT 5 A.M.
TTEMPTING TO CONTACT RESTAURANT OWNERS AND NIGHT SHIFT
AXI DRIVERS IS NOW VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE SINCE VIOLATION
F CURFEW WOULD MEAN CERTAIN DEATH. DEPARTMENT
S REQUESTED TO ADVISE POST OF ANY FURTHER STEPS IT
EELS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN THIS INVESTIGATION.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE 013601
DLEG

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TELEGRAM

TO: Sen. Harrison A. Williams - Senator

DATE: 1-15-81

SUBJECT: Disappearance of John J. Sullivan

My son John J. Sullivan, a free lance reporter, has been missing in El Salvador since December 28. He disappeared from his hotel room and has not been seen since. I am asking the leaders of the United States Government to make a personal appeal on his behalf and help us find him and make sure he is safe.

President Carter
President-Elect Reagan
Secretary of State Muskie

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MAILGRAM SERVICE CENTER
MIDDLETOWN, VA. 22645

Western Union Mailgram

4-0007115017002 01/17/81 ICS IPMBNGZ CSP NWKT
1 2013870413 MGM TDBN BERGENFIELD NJ 01-17 1253A EST

[redacted]

b6
BG

THIS MAILGRAM IS A CONFIRMATION COPY OF THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE:

LT TDBN BERGENFIELD NJ 01-17 1253A EST
INT LT PRESIDENT JOSE N CUARTE
PRESIDENT OF GOVERNING JUNTA
CASA PRESIDENCIAL
SAN SALVADOR (EL SALVADOR)
LA FAMILIA Y AMIGOS DEL PERIODISTA JOHN J SULLIVAN LE RUEGA AL GOBIERNIO DEL BAIS DEL SAN SALVADOR CUAL QUIER INFORMACION CONCERNIENTE ACERCA DE SU ESTADO.
LES ROGAMOS QUE TODOS LOS ESFUERZOS HUMANOS SEAN LLEVADOS ACABO PARA DESCUBRIR EL PARADERO DE JOHN J SULLIVAN
SOLAMENTE DEPENDEMOS DE VUESTRO ESFUERZEO Y DE EL A AYUDA DEL GRAN PODEROSO.
RESPECTUOSAMENTE FAMILIA Y AMIGOS

00:53 EST

MGMCOMP

TRANSULATION
THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF FREE LANCE JOURNALIST JOHN J. SULLIVAN APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF EL SALVADOR FOR ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING HIS STATUS OR WHEREABOUTS WE ASK AND PRAY FOR YOUR ASSURANCE THAT NO STONE WILL BE LEFT UNTURNED IN THE SEARCH FOR OUR SON AND FRIEND WE CAN DEPEND ONLY ON HELP FROM YOU AND ALMIGHTY GOD. THANK YOU.

CC: ARCH BISHOP [redacted] RICARDO URIOSTE
FR/ JOHN SPAIN

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TO REPLY BY MAILGRAM, SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR WESTERN UNION TOLL-FREE PHONE NUMBERS

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January 17, 1981

The Right Reverend Monsignor Clemente Faccani
33-39 Massachusetts Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Right Reverend Monsignor:

I am writing to you in the hope that the Papal Delegate will intercede for my family in a most tragic situation. My son, John J. Sullivan, is a free lance journalist. On December 28, 1980 he flew from his home in Bogota, New Jersey on an assignment for Flint Publications which is located in Los Angeles, California. John's intention was to do an in depth profile on both the right and left factions in the strife torn country of El Salvador. Additionally, he had intended to schedule an appointment with the Maryknoll Mission in El Salvador because he was particularly distressed with the recent murders of the four missionaries.

Several family members told John of their concern for his safety in such a country but he is a professional and he was doing his job. He felt that the situation in El Salvador was no worse that others he had been involved in in Latin American countries, including Nicaragua. John told us before he left that he was not going to be a hero; he just wanted to do his job and was not going to stick his neck out. He had earlier requested of his publisher that his plane reservations be made so that he would not have to travel to his hotel accomodations after dusk.

John arrived in El Salvador via TACA airlines from Miami, Florida in the early evening (approximately 5:00 p.m.) of December 28, 1980. He is believed to have taken a taxi from the airport to the Sheraton Hotel in San Salvador where he checked in at approximately 6:00 p.m. John registered and went to his room where he is alleged to have taken a shower, changed his clothes and rested on his bed. This is where all the factual data ends and supposition grinds on relentlessly. It is as if John vanished from the face of the earth without leaving the slightest trace.

We can make several assumptions at the present time which I will enumerate:

1. John did not leave his room to go to the United States Embassy - He left behind (in his room) a letter of introduction from publisher Malcomb Forbes.

2. John did not go out to do an interview or story - His camera, typewriter and tape recorder are still in his room.

3. John did not plan to be away from his room for a long period of time - An inventory of his belongings revealed that his clean clothes, toilet articles, tooth brush and a book on the Spanish language were still in the room.

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4. John did not go out sightseeing - His concern with arriving at the hotel before dusk indicates his option for travelling was during daylight hours.

5. John was probably wearing a pair of medium grey corduory jeans and a beige poplin golf jacket with tan boots at the time of his disappearance. He is approximately 6' tall, weighs about 190 pounds, has a full beard with dark brown hair. (Pictures have been sent out worldwide through United Press International and Associated Press wire services.

On January 4, 1981 two (2) American labor attorneys were murdered while dining in the Sheraton Hotel. It is on this same day, seven days after John is known to have been in his room, that hotel personnel decided to notify a member of AID who resides in the hotel. He in turn notified the United States Embassy. For still unknown reasons the family was not notified until January 6, 1981. The first notification came from United Press International in the form of an inquiry confirming John's disa-pearance. The official notification came from the U.S. State Department later that night.

As news of John's disappearance spread throughout the family a truly hurculean effort sprung forth and to this day continues in the hopes of discovering what has happened. We began placing phone calls to United States officials who displayed various responses from not knowing of the disappearance to declaring that John's being missing in El Salvador was "not a priority". I would estimate that we have made hundreds of daily phone calls to the Embassy in El Salvador, the State Department in Washington, political personalities in both countries and anyone else who we thought could or would assist us in our search. We tried unsuccessfully to contact the White House until Tuesday, January 13, 1981 when we did receive a call from Secretary of State Edmund Muskie. Lest you think that this call was made out of compassion or some other noble virtue I assure you it was not. Secretary Muskie's call followed no less that two solid hours of calls from my family to the State Department and Members of Congress. Indeed, the only reason we were able to converse with Secretary Muskie was that earlier that day several family members held a meeting with an individual who shall always remain nameless and to whom the family will always be indebted regardless of the outcome of this situation. During the meeting it was learned that several people

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"disappeared" the night that John did but that John was the only American. Some of the other individuals were released only after being badly beaten and after extreme pressure was put on the government by family members. The source went on to relate that if John were a prisoner and a public plea were made by President Carter or a high ranking United States official John's release would be sure to follow if he were still alive. We were impressed with the fact that the situation was urgent.

We then spoke to Secretary Muskie who began his conversation with the declaration that "until thirty minutes ago I did not even know John Sullivan existed" (Two weeks after the fact). Secretary Muskie's interest in the identity of our source became an obsession as the call continued. Secretary Muskie made two most unfortunate and incredulous statements during this phone call:

1. To Mrs. Sullivan he offered " do you think your son is the only person this has happened to".

2. To John's sister Donna he warned that failure to reveal the identity of the source was in effect harming her brother.

The result of the call was the assurance of Secretary Muskie that he would, as we had asked, personally call President Duarte in El Salvador concerning John Sullivan's disappearance. To this date no call has been made by Secretary Muskie although Ambassador White in El Salvador is reported to have made a personal visit to President Duarte on this matter.

There has been no word from or sign of my son since December 28, 1980 and we have nothing but our faith in God to sustain us much longer. While our government pumps millions of dollars in aid into El Salvador we cannot get a proper investigation conducted into the disappearance of John J. Sullivan whose only crime was to be a professional journalist and pursue his career as others have before him.

The dispair we feel is slowly becoming overpowering. It seems as though our world is closing in on us adn we can't do anything to stop it. In the name of justice and the Holy Spirit help us determine what has happened to this courageous young American named John J. Sullivan. Please pray for him.

Very truly yours,

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John J. Sullivan, Sr.

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cc: The Honorable Alexander M. Haig
Secretary of State-Designate

The Honorable Charles Percy
Chairman, Committee of Foreign Relations
United States Senate

The Honorable Harrison A. Williams
The Honorable William Bradley
United States Senate

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STATEMENT FROM SENATOR HARRISON WILLIAMS - JANUARY 19, 1981

I HAVE PUT FORTH MY REQUEST TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR A CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY ON THE MATTER OF THE WHEREABOUTS OF MISSING JOURNALIST, JOHN J. SULLIVAN.

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STATEMENT from Richard Warren Lewis of Flynt Publications, Calif.

The field of publishing and newsgathering is far more than an armchair sport. It is frequently a demanding and sometimes unfortunately a dangerous profession, but one vital to the informational process, which is a mainstay of democratic society.

We were deeply concenred to learn about the disappearance on 12-28-80 of a freelance writer, John J. Sullivan, who was on assignment for us in El Salvador.

All efforts to learn about the circumstances of his disappearance and his fate at this point have been to no avail. His research there posed a threat to no-one, and his work was aimed solely at gathering pertinent information on topics of grave international concern.

Flynt Publications isexploring every avenue in co-operation with John's family, in order to clarify this seemingly tragic circumstance andhopefull obtain a complete knowledge of his whereabouts and fate. We hope and have confidence that John will reappear none the worse for his venture, as he did from assignments for other publications in Nicaragua and Bolivia.

We ask along with his family for every possible help and assistance on every level, in securing a safe release and return of this dedicated journalist.

In the interests of a free press, Governments of every country must give protection to all journalists. ITt is imperative that every effort be made to find out the whereabouts of John J. Sullivan.

[redacted]

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The Authors League of America, Inc.

234 WEST 44TH STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036 • TELEPHONE (212) 391-0198

January 19, 1981

The Authors League of America, the national society of professional authors and dramatists, sent the following telegram to President Reagan and Secretary of State Haig.

The Authors League of America is deeply concerned by the disappearance in El Salvador of journalist John J. Sullivan and our Government's failure to secure his safe return to the United States.

On behalf of its 8500 members, The Authors League requests the State Department to take more effective measures to locate Mr. Sullivan, and rescue him if he is still alive.

The press reports that Washington plans to renew military aid to El Salvador. The Authors League urges that a fundamental condition be placed on that assistance: namely, that El Salvador must exert every possible effort to find Mr. Sullivan and liberate him.

We also urge that U.S. Military and CIA personnel in El Salvador cooperate to the fullest extent in this search.

The Authors League of America, Inc.
by:
Robert Anderson, Vice President
John Hersey

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NEWS FROM PEN American Center

a world association of writers
poets, playwrights, essayists, editors, novelists
with centers in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and the Americas
47 Fifth Avenue • New York City 10003 • 212/255-1977

For Immediate Release: January 19, 1981

PEN American Center Denounces Repression of Journalists in El Salvador

The Freedom to Write Committee of PEN American Center calls upon the government of El Salvador and the U.S. State Dept. to begin immediate investigation to determine the whereabouts of disappeared journalist John J. Sullivan. The continued repression of free expression in El Salvador and the persecution of foreign journalists in order to suppress coverage of the Salvadorian situation is a matter of grave concern.

In addition to John Sullivan, many other foreign journalists have come under attack in El Salvador. These include: Nelson Arietta of Venezuela, arrested by national police on January 12; Danish journalist Nina Bundgaard, held in detention by the Treasury Police; Peter Torbjorssen, of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, arrested and deported on October 20; and Alan Riding, of the New York Times, repeatedly harassed and threatened.

On December 2 of last year UPI correspondent Demetrio Olaciregui of Panama was deported. Olaciregui had previously founded the Association of Foreign Correspondents (ACOES) in order to demand safety for professional journalists in El Salvador.

On August 9, security forces shot and killed Ignacio Rodriguez, reporter for Mexican periodicals Uno Mas Uno, Proceso, and El Norte de Chihuahua.

The Salvadorian press, of course, has been the chief target of violent attacks against free expression. On July 12, Jaime Suarez Quemain and Cesar Najarro, editor and photographer of the major opposition newspaper La Cronica, were tortured and murdered. In the past year, the radio station of the Catholic Church, YSAX, was dynamited five times, destroying its transmitters.

PEN calls upon the government of El Salvador to end the abuse of foreign and local journalists and to secure their right to report. It calls upon the U.S. government to end its military support, which helps to perpetuate this abuse. In addition, both governments should launch an immediate investigation concerning the plight of fellow-writer John J. Sullivan. Without a free press, the current nightmare of El Salvador will not end.

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1-30-81

Mr. Richard
Freedom of Information Privacy Coordinator
Department of State, Room 1239
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: Mr. Kutler

Dear Mr. Richard, As the year
long litigation has progressed in
Kutler v. Reuse the Department
has released additional 12,028-page
documents, Mr. Kutler has found that
they have happened to perfectly mirror
the information originally sent to him piece
by piece together. When the personal
papers in the diaries were withheld,
they probably marked around the files,
but the written information before
was sent to Mr. Kutler all together.

To this end, my client requests, under
provisions of the Freedom of Information
Act, any and all documents the Department
of State may have (other than those already

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HAROLD C. ROUKEMA
6th District, New Jersey

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

January 14, 1981

The Honorable Edmund S. Muskie
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I would like to express my appreciation for your responsiveness to my request that you call Mr. and Mrs. John Sullivan about their son, John, who is currently missing in El Salvador. However, I am still very concerned about serious questions which have been raised concerning the degree of priority being given to the search for Mr. Sullivan.

I have tried to cooperate with your Department on this matter, but certain statements made to the Sullivans by the American embassy in San Salvador and the White House, as well as the political instability currently existing in El Salvador, have made me fearful that Mr. Sullivan's safety is not being given the attention it deserves.

Although my office has been given assurances by Mr. James Ward, the Director of the Overseas Citizens Office of the State Department, that everything possible is being done, the Sullivan family was told by Mr. Howard Lane, the Public Affairs Officer of the American embassy in San Salvador, that the matter was being given a "low priority." I am shocked to learn that the safety of any American citizen in a foreign country would be given a "low priority."

The Sullivans have also been told in a very curt fashion by Mr. Leonard Lefkow of the White House national security staff that there is nothing more that can be done on the matter. After being informed of this, they were abruptly dismissed by Mr. Lefkow.

Meanwhile, while working closely with both the Sullivans and your Department, I have noticed that all of the ideas for following various leads in the case (e.g. verification of travel, checking passenger lists, etc.) have originated with the Sullivans.

According to Mr. Ward, although the identification information has been relayed through the American embassy, the investigation rests entirely within the authority of the Salvadoran police. Yet, there is some question as to the reliability of Salvadoran police investigations concerning American citizens. I understand that the Rogers Report on the recent

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murders of four American nuns in El Salvador states that, while there is no evidence that the Salvadoran government was involved in those murders, there is circumstantial evidence that it assisted in the coverup.

Finally, I have been informed by the home office of Sheraton Hotels in Boston that the Sheraton Motor Inn in San Salvador claims to have informed Mr. Brian J. Bosch, the Defense Attache to the American embassy, on a date prior to January 6 of Mr. Sullivan's disappearance. Yet, the embassy claims that they were not informed of the disappearance until the morning of the 6th, on which date they notified the State Department in Washington. Obviously, if there was any delay in transmitting this information, it would have had a serious negative effect on the investigation.

In light of the above concerns, could you please see that the following questions are answered with dispatch: 1) What has been done up to this point by the State Department in the investigation of the disappearance of John Sullivan? 2) What alternatives may be available to avoid a total reliance upon the Salvadoran police in the investigation? 3) When exactly did the American embassy in San Salvador learn that Mr. Sullivan was missing?

I look forward to your reply and the continued cooperation of the State Department in this matter.

Sincerely,

Marge Roukema

Marge Roukema
Member of Congress

MSR:Dy

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[redacted] B6

nuary 20, 1981

Mr. Sullivan -
Just came in the mail -
from a friend in San Sal.
Best regards

[redacted] B6

Dear Rick:

With reference to John J. Sullivan, there has been absolutely no news about him as to his where abouts.

The only information I was given was that he spent 3 days in Mexico with Col. Adolfo Majano's sister and some marxists, then came to El Salvador to write favorable article on the leftists subversives and guerrilleros.

A car came to the hotel Sheraton and told him that they had been sent to pick him up, and he got in without asking any questions and dissappeared.

I cannot verify the truth of this, so it may or may not be.

Col. Adolfo Majano is considered a leftist that was requested to leave the Military Junta and go to Spain as Military Attache, but he refused and so is considered as insubordinated, however, we have not heard anymore of Col. Majano, although, he is supposed to be under house arrest.

Enclosed is an article that came out in our local newspaper.

Cordially,

[redacted] B6

General Manager

GBN/vp

Enc.

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